



# Environmental Finance Center Network 2001

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER NETWORK – A UNIQUE ASSET FOR THE NATION

The Environmental Finance Center Network is the only university-based organization that creates innovative solutions to help manage the cost of environmental protection. Addressing difficult "how-to-pay" issues, the Network works with both the public and private sectors to promote a sustainable environment.

The Network is comprised of nine Environmental Finance Centers, each affiliated with an EPA Region. These centers are located at the following universities.

- University of New Mexico
- University of Maryland
- Syracuse University
- California State University at Hayward
- Cleveland State University
- Boise State University
- University of Southern Maine
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Louisville

## THE VALUE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER NETWORK

### The Network Is

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| <b>Innovative</b> | The Network shares and integrates information, tools and techniques across the country to develop innovative solutions to difficult problems.                |
| <b>Neutral</b>    | The Network is housed within nine Universities and is not governed by any one public or private agency or organization and so is neutral by its very nature. |

### Multi-Disciplinary

The Network routinely employs staff from multiple disciplines including engineering, business, finance, planning, economic development, science, public administration, and law. For any project, the Network can access the expertise housed within the nine universities.

### Local, Regional & National

The Network has a proven track record of working at all project levels from local to national.

### The Network Offers

### Financial Expertise

In solving environmental problems or addressing environmental issues, the Network brings a unique financial perspective.

### Technical Transfer

The Network has worked in over 40 states and shares information and technical expertise among the states and within the Network to allow a national transfer of information.

### Multi-Media Capabilities

The Network addresses a full range of environmental issues, including: hazardous waste, air, water, wastewater, solid waste, brownfields, environmental technologies and pollution prevention.

### Partnerships w/ the Regulated & Regulators

The Network works with both the regulated community and regulators to promote efficient and effective environmental compliance.

### National Presence

The Network routinely partners with other public and private entities to complete projects throughout the US and beyond.

## Environmental Finance Center Network 2001

### ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER NETWORK TOOLS

The Network provides education, technical assistance and analyses to state and local governments and the private sector through various tools, including the following.

- **Finance Planning Strategies and Programs**
- **Local Economic Development**
- **Stakeholder Meetings**
- **Role-play and Simulations**
- **Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis**
- **Utility Rate Setting**
- **Informal Surveys**
- **Guides**
- **Information Clearinghouse**
- **Strategic Information Systems**
- **Conferences & Workshops**
- **Charrettes**
- **Process Facilitation**
- **Research Publications and Reports, and**
- **Hand-On Assistance**

We have adopted these tools to help us navigate the numerous environmental media in which we work. Some tools apply across a broad spectrum of issues while others are limited to specific media.

**Finance Planning Strategies and Programs** include the provision of financial expertise in areas such as capital financing, operating cost management, innovative loan programs, and strategies and approaches for the public and private sectors.

**Local Economic Development** support involves numerous areas including eco-industrial parks, recycling, open space preservation, brownfields, greenfields, and green business and environmental industry support and promotion.

**Stakeholder Meetings and Charrettes** are implemented in various situations where input from a variety of stakeholders and participants is necessary to resolve an environmental finance problem.

**Role-play and Simulations** have been used in brownfields assistance where stakeholders learn what motivates and interests the other stakeholders with whom they need to negotiate, based on real circumstances.

**Economic and Fiscal Impact Analyses** are frequently performed for various projects including brownfields reclamation, rural land conversions and other forms of development.

**Rate Utility Setting** models and systems development programs have been developed for water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

**Informal Surveys** are frequently used for a range of projects from determining small business incentives for green manufacturing, to assessing local needs for redevelopment.

**Guides** have been developed to assist in shaping local policy and helping consumers choose and locate green businesses.

**Information Clearinghouse** is a role that all Centers play. The Network serves as a national repository and clearinghouse for environmental finance-related information, including information from the USEPA, the national Environmental Financial Advisory Board, and the national Environmental Financing Information Network.

**Strategic Information Systems** have been designed to improve financial and management capabilities of water systems.

**Conferences & Workshops** are offered by the Network throughout the United States on a range of topics from water and wastewater, to brownfields redevelopment and environmental technology transfer.

**Process Facilitation** is a broad tool designed to help take a project from concept to reality. Part of that facilitation may include Internal Partnering Meetings that promote inter-agency cooperation.

Finally the Network offers a wide range of **Research Publications and Reports, and Hands-On Assistance** to national, state, and local agencies as well as tribes and private sector organizations and businesses.

### SELECTED PROJECTS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Since 1992, the Network has been working to promote sustainable development throughout the United States. The following is a selection of projects that best represents our talents.

**Full Cost Pricing of Water and Sewer Services** Small communities struggle with the challenge of providing safe drinking water and effective wastewater treatment services to the public. As a result, the Network provides

## Environmental Finance Center Network 2001

public health and environmental protection services at the lowest cost possible. Communities throughout the country have benefited from low or no-cost assistance in the areas of rate setting, capital replacement financing, financial management and assessing the impact of capital investments.

**Brownfields Remediation and Cleanup** Brownfield remediation projects have been profiled through site visits, while other projects actively involve Network members as partners in their operation. Program Evaluations for the Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund have been conducted, as have assessments of the impacts of state-level brownfield regeneration promotion efforts. The Network has been involved in coordinating promotion efforts at the regional level and in the design and implementation of local level innovations including a Brownfield One-Stop-Shop initiative.

**Multi-State Grants and Loans Database** A database is being compiled of grants and low cost loans for environmental projects in North Carolina as well as five other southeastern states: South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. This database will be made available to local governments and citizen groups in those five states to help them identify low cost financing approaches for environmental projects. This database will also be an extension of the Network and EPA's Guidebook of Financial Tools.

**Environmental Finance Course** A course is being produced on environmental finance, intended to bridge the gap between existing academic courses on public finance and existing training programs for government officials. The course will be available for delivery throughout the Network and will be presented as a series of modules that can work together for an extended course of study, or separately for focus on individual topics.

**Environmental Finance Policy Guides** Guides are being developed to be used throughout the Network by state local government associations, Rural Community Action Program staffs and others. Topics, readable by people with high school educations, include the issues of land value 'takings' by regulation, resources valuation issues in water and wastewater system mergers/acquisitions, choosing among alternative subsidies for brownfield regeneration, and the economic and environmental features of different policy responses to urbanization pressures.

**Unified Source Water Protection** Working under a joint EPA/RUS Pilot initiative, a unified source water protection plan was developed to incorporate the needs of many water systems in New Mexico. The single or unified plan: reduced duplication of effort, allowed for a more expansive look at water resources, allowed for a

greater community involvement, and permitted side benefits by bringing water system managers and operators together on an ongoing frequent basis. This project will be replicated in four other EPA regions in an upcoming joint EPA/Network project.

**Construction Debris Recycling Program** A collaborative program was developed among government housing agencies, nonprofit housing entities, and private developers to recycle material from demolished housing or other structures.

**Funding Analysis** The Network frequently assesses performance of individual funding programs available for environmental improvements or infrastructure development. In addition, focus groups and informant interviews of program representatives and program beneficiaries or recipients have been conducted, and strategies recommended for cooperative funding to maximize opportunities for beneficiaries to obtain financing in the most cost-effective and politically palatable manner.

**Mini-Grants Program for Local Government** In a partnership with USEPA, the 2000/2001 Mini-Grants Program for Local Government is being managed. The purpose of the "Mini Grants" program, which could be replicated throughout the Network, is to promote effective technical assistance to business by providing seed money for local governments to build local Multi-agency Assistance Programs. Grant proposals must be tailored to specific industries, administered at the local level and be multi-media.

**Environmental Insurance for Brownfields** Research has been conducted on available insurance products and their utility for brownfield projects. In addition, technical assistance has been provided to state and municipal brownfield programs and instruction has been offered for continuing legal education seminars and other forms of training for brownfields stakeholders. Current efforts include designing model insurance programs for municipally- and state-led redevelopment programs.

**Clean Water Action Plan Financial Training** Training workshops have been developed which promote the coordination of funding and technical assistance programs with innovative financing techniques to support watershed management. Participants explore innovative solutions to multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary issues encountered within a watershed. Network trainings have been held in EPA regions 10 and 5 and are scheduled for regions 8 and 3 in 2001.

**Small Business Participation in a Green Business Program** A partnership was formed with numerous government agencies and regional Green Business Programs, to examine the barriers and incentives to

## Environmental Finance Center Network 2001

printers' and other business participation in a regional Green Business Program. The results of this analysis can be applied to other programs throughout the US.

**Smart Growth Planning** Network Smart Growth projects include efforts to help an agricultural community preserve its rural heritage. Providing advice for a comprehensive planning effort is part of a county project that will include economic and financial assistance and a financing charrette in spring 2001 focusing on financing land protection initiatives.

**EnviroLoan & Strategic Goals Program** Projects for the National Strategic Goals Program included developing the Access to Capital EnviroLoan Program – a pollution prevention (P2) loan program for metal finishers. Current work is focused on marketing the Goals Program statewide and with the support of EPA and other Goals participants, seeking legislation to implement a California Strategic Goals Program.

**Million Acres Initiative - Open Space Preservation** In a state effort that may be replicable, support is being provided to the North Carolina legislature's Million Acres Initiative to conserve land for open space, farmland preservation, riparian buffers and other conservation purposes. Surveys and interviews are being used to assess the amount of land already protected, the rate at which land would be protected over the next ten years at current funding levels, the size of the revenue gap needed to complete the million acre goal, and the funding alternatives potentially available.

**Watershed Funding Workshops** Three watershed funding workshops were conducted in EPA Region 10. The demand for the workshops was so high that a plan has been established and funded by EPA and the states to offer approximately 20 more workshops within Region 10 in fiscal year 2001.

**Sustainable Infrastructure Development** This project will define a vision for a Great Lakes regional approach to prioritizing capital investments which sustain the regional system of infrastructure.

**Multi-State Assistance to State Regulatory Departments** Capacity Development Programs were developed for ten different states to assist water systems with improving their technical, managerial, and financial capabilities. These programs ranged from setting up direct technical assistance to systems, to assisting with partnering between systems and various options in between.

**Intergovernmental and Inter-Agency Cooperation** The first ever meeting on public funding or watershed restoration efforts was convened in the state of Idaho. This meeting included representatives of EPA, USFS,

BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, USACE, USF&W, Bonneville Power Administration, NRCS, ID Dept of Ag, ID Dept of Fish and Game, ID Dept of Water Resources, ID Dept of Environmental Quality and other private foundations. The purpose of the meeting was to initiate a dialogue on the various funding sources and the match requirements associated with the various programs.

**Financing A Cluster Wastewater System** As part of a multi-region effort, a charrette was held in Yarmouth MA, to help locate financing for a "cluster" wastewater treatment system to replace septic systems that had been nitrogen-loading the local estuary and its ecosystem. This charrette, an example of a community-planning tool widely used by the network, helped develop a solution that may also be generalized to fit other similarly dense seasonal communities on Cape Cod and other tourist meccas.

### WHERE HAS THE ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER NETWORK WORKED?

Haven't heard of us? If you haven't already, you probably will soon because the Network is continually expanding its range of services and the states it serves. The following is a list of states that have benefited from our services thus far.

Alabama	Alaska	California	Colorado
Delaware	Florida	Georgia	Hawaii
Idaho	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa
Kansas	Kentucky	Louisiana	Maine
Maryland	Massachusetts	Michigan	Mississippi
Missouri	Montana	Nebraska	Nevada
New Jersey	New Mexico	New York	North Carolina
Ohio	Oklahoma	Oregon	Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania	South Carolina	Tennessee	Texas
Utah	Vermont	Virginia	Washington
West Virginia	Wisconsin		

### CONTACT US

Have questions? Please feel free to email any one of our officers.

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